



Philip Isenberg, Chair
Delta Stewardship Council
980 Ninth Street, Suite 1500
Sacramento, CA
95814

Friday, January 28, 2011

Re: Scoping Comments for the Delta Stewardship Plan and the Notice of Preparation for the Completion of an EIR on the Delta Stewardship Plan

Dear Mr Philip Isenberg:

The Sierra Business Council appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed Delta Stewardship Plan scoping issues. We also wish to thank the Delta Stewardship Council for its leadership and dedication to solving one of the great issues affecting California and its quality of life.

As members of a nonprofit organization representing businesses throughout the Sierra Nevada our business leaders have particular interest in how our region, where much of the water originates, will be impacted by proposals to increase Delta exports by the Central Valley Water Project and State Water project contractors. You have the laudable goal of ensuring the Delta ecosystem and its values under the public trust doctrine are preserved and protected while providing a reliable supply of water to exporters from the Delta for the next 50 years.

For years areas of origin where water is diverted and exported have been promised sufficient water to meet growing needs. The federal and state water projects have a record of unmet promises when it comes to mitigating impacts and providing promised water supplies to the areas where the water is taken. This transfer of wealth or water, primarily from the Sierra Nevada region, without fair compensation must stop. We urge that, as part of the financing mechanisms, a charge per gallon of water exported be returned to the surrounding counties and communities as part of the cost of the water exports. Further we urge that taxpayer subsidies, especially to Central Valley Project contractors, be stopped, and full cost pricing adopted as anticipated under the Central Valley Project Improvement Act of 1992. In addition, we urge existing funding commitments for recreational and watershed protection costs from these federal project diversions, such as those promised to the Auburn State Recreation Area, be provided without delay.

To be a successful plan for fifty years, the Delta Stewardship Council must define reliable and sustainable water supply that fully protects public trust values. We understand the federal and state water contract exporters' desire to narrow the definition within the EIR to include only engineering or some physical export apparatus. Such a narrow definition would inevitably lead to additional conflict.



We believe the following principles should guide the plan development:

1. **Guarantee Sufficient Fresh Water to Support & Restore the Delta Ecosystem:** The Bay-Delta Estuary is a national and statewide resource critical to California's economic health, to the plants, animals, birds and fish that live here, and to the health of our communities. The public trust benefits of the Bay-Delta Estuary extend into the Sierra Nevada and Northern California watersheds, essential not only to healthy water supplies, but critical fishery migration and wildlife corridors.
2. **Enforce Existing Water Pollution Control Standards:** Water quality and pollution control standards must be enforced to protect and restore water quality of the Bay-Delta Estuary. Westside federal contractors need to clean up their water pollution mess before passing it to the Delta communities to bear the brunt of clean up costs and damages.
3. **More Water Exports Should Not be Promised before Safe Limits are Established:** Existing export of fresh water flows from the Bay-Delta Estuary should be contingent on ensuring sufficient water to support and restore the Delta ecosystem in perpetuity and reserve sufficient supplies for areas of origin.
4. **Reduce Risks to people and property determine a safe yield for water exports:** A "water grab", that allows more water exports by ignoring the restraints of nature or expanding exports by promising unrealistic inflated quantities of water, does not promote reliability, it promotes conflict. Providing water to areas south of the Bay-Delta Estuary, must protect the habitat and the local economies of the Sierra Nevada, Northern California, Delta and the San Joaquin River regions.
5. **Enforce water rights:** Don't allow politically connected and powerful interests to sell publicly owned water supplies at a profit while damaging surrounding communities and their groundwater supplies.
6. **Protect Taxpayers:** The taxpayer must not bear, either through bonds or direct payments, the cost of exporting water from the Bay-Delta Estuary and surrounding rivers. Any plan adopted to export water from the Northern California and Sierra watersheds must be cost effective and ensure those exporting water from the Delta Bay Estuary can pay the mitigation costs, design, capital and operational costs.
7. **Require Water Conservation AS A Top Priority:** Water conservation is the most cost effective method of creating additional water supplies. Any plan that contemplates spending billions of



dollars in ratepayer or taxpayer revenues should incorporate strong water conservation objectives and implementation measures, and require a vote of the people before their tax dollars or water rates are pledged to pay for such risky engineering projects.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Steven R. Frisch
President, Sierra Business Council

CC: Senator Feinstein
Senator Boxer
Congressman McClintock
Terry Macaulay